

SENATE MEETING MINUTES
November 17, 2023

The 647th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, November 17, 2023, at 2:00 PM, in CLARI, Atrium room 340.

PRESENT: Dr. Summerby-Murray, Dr. VanderPlaat, Dr. Zhyznomirska, Dr. Samou, Dr. Veres, Dr. Ingraham, Mr. Brophy, Ms. van den Hoogen, Dr. Dodge, Dr. Austin, Dr. Grek-Martin, Dr. Hlongwane, Dr. Brosseau, Dr. Hare, Dr. Ylijoki, Dr. Kocum, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Fan, Dr. Grandy, Dr. Sanderson, Dr. Stinson, Ms. Tan, Ms. Barrett, Ms. Boudreau, Mr. Ganapathy, Ms. Hodge, Ms. Shannon Morrison, Secretary to Senate

GUESTS: Dr. Akbari, Dr. Day, Dr. Akiyama, Dr. Poovancheri

REGRETS: Mr. Seneker, Dr. Raymond, Dr. Sarty,

Dr. Grandy chaired. The meeting was called to order at 2:06 P.M., and a territorial acknowledgment was provided.

24029 **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The agenda was accepted as posted.

24030 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – Posted as ***Appendix B*** (10 min)

Key Discussion Points:

The President referred to the report included with the meeting materials and highlighted the following:

Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centered Environment

- I attended the student project that was initiated through the Arthur L Irving Entrepreneurship Center, the launch of a small business.
- There was an opportunity for 200 Saint Mary's students to attend A Conversation with Michelle Obama on October 20.
- Celebrated the continued work with research and discovery from book launches to the Atlantic Canada's Histories Geo tour, which celebrates the spaces of African Nova Scotians across our region through geocaching.

Intercultural Learning

- I have met and connected with students in the MSc in Data Analytics program to discuss some of the challenges that exist and the diplomatic tension with India to get a sense of their concerns in terms of connecting with family and friends.

- I attended the opening events of the Universities Studying Slavery Conference which was held on the same day as the African Nova Scotian Justice Symposium that was held here.
- Would like to draw attention to the success of our Centre for Global Engagement in securing further funding from the Global Skills Opportunity program as part of the federal government's International Education Strategy. It is increasing the opportunity for our students to travel overseas to Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand. It also gives an opportunity for students from universities in those countries to come here.

Institutional Sustainability:

- Saint Mary's hosted the Universities Canada 'Net Zero Climate Change Workshop.'
- There have been many meetings with the Board of Governors over the past few months with a large amount of work on government relations, which is a key part of my role including meeting with Minister Mark Miller to talk about international education.
- I continued our work with the government of Nova Scotia on the next steps in the MOU between the government of Nova Scotia and provincial universities. There has been progress in that discussion. I pitched the idea of an MOU that should see between 5-7 % reset on the operating grant. We achieved assurance from the Premier in his support to open federal funding for housing to universities. The federal funding for housing is currently not available for universities. We continue to lobby, and I remain optimistic that we may get access to those funds.

24031

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT –

Posted as **Appendix C** for this meeting. (5 mins)

Key Discussion Points:

The Interim VPAR referred to the report included with the meeting material and highlighted the following points:

- Currently working on the Program Development Support and Innovation. The concept came out of the Action for Health \$25 million investment and the intent of the office is to provide administrative support for large-scale projects. This is going to help faculty with appointments, etc. There will be full-time staff associated with it, administrative support, an Academic Partnership Accelerator, and a Continuous Improvement Coordinator. In addition to that, the office will pull in the various skill sets it may need to help with the projects.
- We have hired an Accessibility Lead who will be starting on January 1st, 2024. The search for the Dean of the Sobey School of Business is resuming and we have had the first meeting for the search for the Dean of Science.

24032

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Listed as **Appendix D** (5 min)

Key Discussion Points:

- We had a very successful Academic Integrity Week.
- Talk-to-us Table is held each week as an initiative to reduce barriers and encourage students to ask questions, voice their concerns, and express their appreciation for all university-related matters. There has been a steady engagement rate.
- SMUSA continues to receive student concerns regarding the vacancies in the Indigenous Student and Black Student Advisor positions. These roles are crucial for the success and safety of these student communities.

24033

QUESTION PERIOD (length at the discretion of chair based on business volume)

Question/Comments:

- **Question:** Are we on schedule to get the report on December 1st on the Positive Action to Improve the Employment of Women, Indigenous People, Visible Minorities, and Peoples with Disabilities at Saint Mary's University?
Answer: Yes
- **Question:** Do we have a status update on the selection process to form the search committees for the Vice-President Academic and Research and the Associate Vice-President Teaching and Learning?
Answer: We do not have a process in place for the Associate Vice-President Teaching and Learning at this point. The Vice-President Academic and Research is beginning as we move to clarify the role. This role is governed by the Board policies, which the Board is finalizing. Then, we will proceed with the terms of reference for all those committees. That includes the search for the Vice-President Finance and Administration and then be followed by the search for the Vice-President Academic and Research, which may include components of a provost model. Regarding the VPFA, we have gone to market with an RFQ to three search consultants which will close in a few weeks.
- **Question:** Will the AVP Teaching and Learning follow the same process?
Answer: We do not know that yet.
- **Question:** Can you elaborate more on the policies around the committee structures with the Board of Governors?
Answer: What the Board has been doing is reviewing its policies and that includes the policies on Academic Administrator Appointments, which includes The Deans, VPAR, and also policies on the administration of Vice-Presidents, such as Vice-President Finance and Administration and the Vice President Advancement. As policies change and the proposed selection committees change, we need to ensure these are fully approved by the Board before moving ahead. In terms of other committees, the structures include the annual review of Terms of Reference for each Board Committee.
- **Question:** Do we continue to receive funding from the government for the Global Skills Opportunities?

Answer: That funding in the Global Skills Opportunities was intended primarily for the 2017-2018 International Education Strategy we refer to as emerging markets. Only 3-4% of Canadian undergraduates have international experience, which is well below most. Canada is behind many countries in Europe, USA, and Australia. The goal of this program was to make between 20 - 75 thousand students. We are not there yet as a country. This program was designed for students who may not likely have access to the means to gain international experience. The program included Saint Mary's, MSVU and Dalhousie indigenous students exploring programs with indigenous students in other countries such as Thailand and Vietnam. Currently, we are lobbying the federal government to extend the program, as it was only developed as a pilot.

- **Question:** Is there any progress on a team-teaching framework? This issue was raised at Senate when Butler was VPAR. Are there any updates?

Answer: This was not on my list of items that I inherited when I stepped into the role. I think this is a fabulous idea. It needs to be a thing and I will put this on my list.

- **Question:** There was a survey sent out to all faculty regarding the Teaching and Learning plan and I have received negative feedback from colleagues that some of the questions were unanswerable.

Answer: This is a situation where the survey was sent out from the VPAR's office to get a better response rate. A SEM committee created this, and I will follow up with the committee.

- **Question:** A few years ago, the Board initiated a process of looking at the University Act with revisions that included Senate input and then we ran into COVID. Has there been any attempt to revise that process?

Answer: Yes. Senate is referred to in the universities' legislation in the Founding Act. We did have a consultation with Senate pre-pandemic and pre-current government. Last fall we did pick up and consulted with the Deputy Minister and have had some further guidance in that area regarding timing. In the last month, we have reviewed and need to go back and have further consultation. You should expect in the next few months something to come back from the University Secretary.

Comment: In 2019-20 Senate was invited by the Board to look at the sections pertaining to Senate within the University Act and to provide recommendations to the Board regarding any changes to those portions of the Act, which was done. As this approach worked well then, Senate hopes that any new discussions concerning changes to the Act will follow the same process, even if the same recommendation is not made.

- **Question:** Where are we with the process of hiring a Black Student Advisor and an Indigenous Student Advisor? And do we have a timeline for when these positions will be filled?

Answer: The process for these positions has moved in a different direction so we can have a community consultation. We have engaged with Jaime Battiste, a

member of Parliament in Cape Breton who is working with us to establish the next step of the process. We want to ensure this is done in an acceptable manner. As for the Black Student Advisor, we are also waiting to get community advice. We will be moving forward with this as soon as we can. We can provide more details in December.

24034 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the October 13, 2023 meeting were circulated as *Appendix E*.

There being no other revisions or objections, the minutes of the senate meeting of October 13, 2023, are approved by members who attended Senate on October 13, 2023.

24035 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS AGENDA**

1. Membership on Senate Committees for 2023-2024, *Appendix E*

Section A

Academic Integrity

TBA/Business

Library

Shannon Simon

Accessibility

Paul Muir

Budget

Peter Webster

Learning and Teaching

Val Johnson

Lindsay Macumber

Moved by Dr. Austin and seconded by Dr. Samou “**that Senate approved the recommendations as presented in Appendix E for membership on the Senate Committees.**” **Motion carried.**

2. Follow-up on Recommendation 5 from the Ad Hoc Committee to review ICE Process Report.

Key Discussion Points:

- This will be the process of creating another committee. I have contacted all of the appropriate people, and we are looking for volunteers. Dr. Enns will be setting up a sub-committee. If you know anyone or if you would like to be on this committee, please email Dr. Enns.
- **Action item:** Dr. Kocum to email Dr. Enns as she wishes to volunteer to be on this committee.
- **Action item:** Shannon will put a call out to the general faculty to join this committee.

24036 **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. **Academic Planning**

a). Computing Science & Business Administration one-year program review. (Dr. Yasushi Akiyama & Dr. Poovancheri)

Key Discussion Points:

- There are some action plans set out and we are working on them.
- Comment – I ran into a student in this program who was very positive about this intersection between Computer Science and Business. This student transferred from another university and loves the quality of teaching. I am pleased that we have representatives on here to receive that feedback.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Veres **“that Senate approve the one-year follow-up report of the Computing Science & Business Administration Program as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.” Motion Carried**

b). Master of Applied Economics one-year program review. (Dr. Ather Akbari)

Key Discussion Points:

- The MAE program was introduced in 2014 and started out with five students and now the program has grown and has 17 students. We added the PBECE Certificate Program in Applied Economics which was later approved by MPHEC and is now a stand-alone program. It also provides a bridging program for students who lack the requirements to get into the Masters program. It is very successful.
- We must guarantee our incoming students good, valued scholarships as we compete with other institutions for enrolment.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Ingraham **“that Senate approve the one-year follow-up report of the Master of Applied Economics Program as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Graduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.” Motion Carried**

c). Program Proposal for Online MSc in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. (Dr Day)

Key Discussion Points:

- This is an online version of what we currently offer. We have been getting requests and the military has been trying to study with us for the past 4 years and have come to us as their first choice. The military did a survey with their members and their interest in the online program, and they specifically asked if Saint Mary’s offered this program, would you be interested? The uptake was very high. The military will provide funding for them to do their education without moving their family. This is not only open to the military but is for anyone who has the requirements.
- Question: There is a mention of a new hire in the appendices. Is that aspirational? Or is that already in the works?
Answer: It has been approved. We are waiting for Senate approval before we post it.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Veres “**that Senate approve the MPHEC proposal for an Online Master’s in Industrial/Organizational Psychology for submission to MPHEC.**” **Motion carried.**

d). Program Proposal for Online Graduate Diploma in Personnel Psychology. (Dr. Day)

Key Discussion Points:

- There have been many requests for a slimmed-down version that can be done part-time. We have many people who are out in the workforce who want to increase their skills. This is a mini version and can be done full-time in a year and part-time over two years. There is no thesis or internship component. The courses are the same, just a reduced number of courses.
- Question: What do you expect the class sizes to be? In terms of being hybrid classes?
Answer: A maximum of 12-15 students.
Comment: Thank you. I just wanted to see how it impacted a strong program with small class sizes.
Answer: We did talk to the faculty who would be involved with these courses as we did not want to impact the quality of instruction in any way.
- Question: Will these courses be co-located with the courses for the online and in-person MCs in I/O Psychology? Otherwise, might the existing faculty be spread to thin?
Answer: Dr. Day confirmed that the issue had been accounted for in terms of planned scheduling and co-location of courses.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Austin “**that Senate approve the MPHEC proposal for an Online Graduate Diploma in Personnel Psychology for submission to MPHEC.**” **Motion carried.**

2. Academic Regulations

a). Guidance for Faculty – Academic Integrity in Group Work. Undergraduate AR 18. This item also impacts Graduate AR 33 (Dr. Grandy)

Dr Grandy relinquished the Chair responsibilities to Dr. Grek-Martin for this motion and discussion.

Key Discussion Points:

- The guidelines arose from an appeal that came before the Academic Integrity Appeal Board from a graduate report in the Business School that revealed problems with our regulations and from the professor's point of view with a lack of guidance on what professors can do around academic integrity and group projects.
- Question: Where will this document sit?
Answer: It will be distributed to faculty numerous times and the University Secretariat Office is revamping its website. There will be a section on it focused on Academic Integrity with helpful links and documents for both faculty and students. This document will go on that site once it is live.

- This will also be sent to the Studio to be posted on their website and a Senator suggested it might be posted to the library website as well.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Ms. van den Hoogen “**that Senate approve the Guidelines for Faculty – Academic Integrity in Group Work, to be distributed to faculty.**” **Motion Carried.**

b). 2024-2025 Academic Calendar of Events

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: Is there an update on the Patronal Feast Holiday, I do not see it on the December list.
Answer: This item is the Academic Calendar, not the days on which the university is open, but it does look like we need to look further into this as January 2nd is still a holiday.
Comment: My concern is when that holiday falls on a teaching day, it makes it challenging to get things done when all administrative offices are closed and there are limited food options for the students.
- Question: The final exam period for the spring term includes June 14-17, Friday to Tuesday. Is it the intention to have the final exams on a Sunday?
Answer: We will look into that. The AVP of Enrolment is not here today.
- Comment: There has been a tradition of starting a term on a Wednesday and the second term starts on Monday. Both terms are starting on Monday and ending on Monday.
- Clarification: Are you suggesting that classes start on September 9?
- Comment: I have never seen a semester start this late. We are starting a week after Labour Day. One of my first concerns is what that means for the students who are moving into residence over Labour Day weekend. With classes starting as late as September 9, I think that leaves the students with a long period of unstructured amount of time.
- Comment: In Chemistry we have labs on Mondays. We cannot start a lab before the class meets. That will cause an issue with accreditation. We traditionally start on Wednesday.
- **Action Item:** Come back to Senate with a detailed analysis of days in a term MWF and TTh and ensure we are following the contact hours.

Moved by Dr. Grandy and seconded by Dr. Zhyznomirska, “**To send this back to Academic Regulations and bring this back to Senate in December.**” **Motion Carried.**

24037

NEW BUSINESS FROM

- a). Floor (not involving notice of motion)
- b). Floor (involving notice of motion)

Question: What is the status of the Academic Regulations Committee on the weight of a final exam? Answer: The issue is that the Faculty of Science has been unable to discuss

this yet. We are waiting for feedback from all faculties. This is about shifting the weight from a missed exam to a final exam.

Comment – We are hearing concerns from students; we would like a policy to be implemented.

c) Chair

24038

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3: 21 P.M.